

(LCN Connections Issue 13 – November 2014)

OF BIRDS AND BODIES

by Beca Lewis

It happened at the airport, and it changed my view of bodies forever.

When I wrote my book *Living In Grace*, the hardest chapter to write was the one on bodies. I didn't want to write it. I worried that if I said, "We are not our bodies," not many would believe me, and all of us would have trouble making that statement practical in our lives.

After all, think of all the ways we believe ourselves to be our bodies.

Our bodies are how people know us. We appear to live in them. They provide basic transportation. The mirror reminds us that what we feel like inside is not often what the mirror reflects back to us. We have a picture of how bodies are "supposed" to look and sometimes we come close to that picture but often we don't; and that disparity results in a variety of feelings – not usually happy.

We feed our bodies. We put them to bed. We take them out for walks, and sometimes we exercise them. They help us express ourselves. Sometimes our bodies are our expression.

However, because I was writing a section on relationships, I knew I couldn't leave out a chapter on bodies. Yet, I knew that for most of us, yes I include myself, we would be fighting a battle with one of our strongest held beliefs, and it was, and is, a hard one to shift.

Until that day at the airport, I didn't realize that I had retained a perception of what a human body looks like, and it was the standard view of shape and proportion.

Then I saw something that changed the view.

I was daydreaming while waiting for my ride, not in any mode of judgment, just observing. I watched people greet each other with love and enthusiasm; often it was members of their family. I knew they were family because they looked like each other. One particular family that was especially effusive in their greeting caught my eye as they hugged, and in my daydreaming, I imagined them as a family of beautiful round and multicolored beetles.

That's when the world snapped around to a new picture of what it is to possess a human body.

(Read more)

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